

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 HELSIN 01810 092104Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 SSC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
/081 W

-----010827 102035Z /63

R 091238Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2802  
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY OSLO  
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE HELSINKI 1810

E. O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, PINR, FI  
SUBJ: "NEW" LIBERAL PARTY ELECTS NEW CHAIRMAN

1. SUMMARY. AT ITS SIXTH PARTY CONGRESS JUNE 4, FINLAND'S LIBERAL PEOPLE'S PARTY (LKP) ELECTED A NEW SLATE OF LEADERS HEADED BY ITS NEW CHAIRMAN, EDUCATION MINISTER JAAKKO ITALA, AND SOUGHT TO SHAKE OFF THE GLOOM OF RECENT ELECTION SETBACKS BY PROCLAIMING A REVITALIZED ROLE FOR ITSELF AS THE TRUE ADVOCATE OF THE INTERESTS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS. THE ATTEMPT TO RENOVATE THE PARTY'S IMAGE WILL PROBABLY NOT BE CONVINCING ENOUGH TO VOTERS TO BRING A MAJOR ELECTORAL BREAKTHROUGH, BUT UNDER ITALA'S LEADERSHIP THE LKP MAY STRENGTHEN ITS WEAKENED POLITICAL POSITON SOMEWHAT. END SUMMARY

2. THE LKP, A SMALL CENTRIST PARTY WITH EIGHT OUT OF THE 200 SEATS IN FINLAND'S PARLIAMENT, HELD ITS THREE-DAY CONGRESS JUNE 2 TO 4 IN HAMEENLIINA. IN ADDITION TO  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 HELSIN 01810 092104Z

ITS EIGHT PARLIAMENTARIANS, THE PARTY'S TWO CABINET MEMBERS, EDUCATION MINISTER ITALA AND JUSTICE MINISTER PAAVO MIKULA, PLAYED PROMINENT ROLES AT THE CONGRESS. THE PARTY'S INTERNATIONAL TIES WERE REPRESENTED BY FRATERNAL DELEGATIONS FROM GREAT BRITIAN, POLAND, THE GDR, NORWAY AND SWEDEN, AS WELL AS FROM THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL. AN EMBASSY OFFICER ATTENDED AS AN

INVITED GUEST, AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE SOVIET AND BRITISH EMBASSIES WERE ALSO PRESENT.

3. THE MAIN CONCERN OF THE CONGRESS WAS TO CHOOSE A SUCCESSOR TO LONG-TIME CHAIRMAN, PEKKA TARJANNE, A LAME DUCK SINCE HIS APPOINTMENT LAST YEAR AS DIRECTOR OF THE POST AND TELEGRAPH SERVICE. ALTHOUGH SEVERAL NAMES HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN SPECULATION, THE MOST SERIOUS CANDIDATES FOR THE CHAIRMANSHIP WERE ITALA AND PARTY SECRETARY KALEVI VILJANEN. ITALA, PROFITING FROM THE MOMENTUM BUILDING SINCE HIS MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENT IN MARCH, WON HANDILY. AS NEW VICE CHAIRMEN, THE PARTY CHOSE MP TERHI NIEMINEN AND PROFESSOR OLAVI BORG.

4. THE MOST URGENT ORDER OF BUSINESS FACING THE LKP'S NEW LEADERSHIP IS TO REJUVENATE THE PARTY AND REVERSE THE TREND OF VOTER LOSSES UNDER TARJANNE. PARTY SUPPORT HAS DECLINED FROM 5.5 PERCENT IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS OF 1968 (WHEN TARJANNE TOOK OVER) AND FIVE PERCENT IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF THAT YEAR TO 4.6 PERCENT IN THE 1976 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND ONLY 2.9 PERCENT IN THIS YEAR'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THE DECLINE, INCLUDING DISTASTE AMONG LKP CONSTITUENTS FOR THE PARTY'S ENDORSEMENT OF PRESIDENT KEKKONEN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 HELSIN 01810 092104Z

THIS YEAR. ONE KEY FACTOR HAS BEEN THE POLICY OF CENTRIST COOPERATION WHICH HAS KEPT THE LKP IN GOVERNMENT FOR MOST OF THE LAST DECADE BUT AT THE PRICE OF OBSCURING THE PARTY'S IDENTITY. SENTIMENT AT THE CONGRESS WAS CLEARLY FOR IMPROVING THE PARTY'S IMAGE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CENTRIST COOPERATION. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT DESPITE THE DISMAL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS, THE LKP GAINED A STRONGER GOVERNMENTAL ROLE WHEN THE SWEDISH PEOPLE'S PARTY, FACING SIMILAR PROBLEMS, WITHDREW FROM GOVERNMENT (HELSINKI A-19).

5. CHAIRMAN ITALA, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE LKP IN 1965 (CURRENT BIO DATA REPORTED IN HELSINKI 764), EMPHASIZED CENTRIST COOPERATION IN HIS ACCEPTANCE SPEECH, WHILE CALLING FOR SLIGHTLY MORE INDEPENDENCE FOR THE LKP. BOTH TARJANNE AND ITALA SPOKE OF THE "NEW LKP" WHICH ITALA DESCRIBED AS A MIDDLE-CLASS PARTY APPEALING TO WHITE COLLAR EMPLOYEES, CIVIL SERVANTS, PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS, AND PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE IN GENERAL. SAYING THAT THE PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE REQUIRE THE RESTORATION OF TRADITIONAL MIDDLE-CLASS

VALUES, ITALA TOLD THE CONGRESS THAT THE ANSWER IS HUMANE LIBERALISM BECAUSE HUMANE CAPITALISM AND HUMANE SOCIALISM SIMPLY DON'T EXIST. ITALA SET A GOAL OF EIGHT PERCENT FOR THE PARTY IN THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, TO BE HELD BY MARCH, WHICH WOULD GIVE THE LKP 16 SEATS.

6. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS COMPETITION FOR ALL THREE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS, ON IDEOLOGICAL OR TACTICAL QUESTIONS. THE BROAD UNITY ON BASIC ISSUES WAS REFLECTED IN THE ACTION PROGRAM PASSED BY THE CONGRESS WHICH ASSERTED THAT THE LKP IS THE APPROPRIATE ADVOCATE OF THE INTERESTS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS BECAUSE "THE LEFT IS NOT INTERESTED IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 HELSIN 01810 092104Z

GROUP AND THE CENTER PARTY IS AN INTEREST ORGANIZATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION ALONE." THE ACTION PROGRAM CALLED FOR PROPORTIONAL ELECTIONS IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, A DIVISION OF SEATS IN PARLIAMENT MORE DIRECTLY LINKED TO THE NUMBER OF VOTES SCORED BY EACH PARTY, THE DIRECT POPULAR ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT, A VALUE-ADDED TAX SYSTEM, AND EXPANSIONARY DEFICIT SPENDING BY THE GOVERNMENT IN 1979.

7. COMMENT. THE IMAGE OF A "NEW LIBERAL PARTY" MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY CONVINCING. AS A SKEPTICAL PRESS HAS POINTED OUT, MOST POLITICAL PARTIES DRAW SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM FINLAND'S DOMINANT MIDDLE CLASS AND IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE LKP CAN INCREASE ITS STRENGTH SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF ITS RATHER VAGUE APPEAL TO THIS GROUP. MOREOVER, AS SOME OF THE SEATS CURRENTLY HELD BY THE LKP ARE DUE TO ELECTORAL ALLIANCES WITH OTHER PARTIES, AN EXCESSIVE ASSERTION OF INDEPENDENCE COULD ACTUALLY RESULT IN FEWER SEATS IN THE NEXT ELECTION. THE LIBERAL PARTY DOES APPEAR TO HAVE A CERTAIN APPEAL TO SOME SEGMENTS OF THE FINNISH MIDDLE CLASS, PARTICULARLY IN THE URBANIZED AREAS OF THE SOUTH. THIS SUPPORT IS OBVIOUSLY QUITE LIMITED COMPARED TO THAT OF THE MAJOR FINNISH PARTIES BUT DOES PROVIDE A MODEST CONTINUING BASE FOR THE LIBERALS. THE PARTY SHOULD RECEIVE SOME BENEFIT FROM ITS FRESH LEADERSHIP. ALTHOUGH ITALA IS LACKING IN POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND CHARISMA, HIS COMMANDING PRESENCE, GOOD LOOKS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITIES MAY HELP INJECT SOME LIFE INTO THE LKP. END COMMENT. RIDGWAY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MEETING DELEGATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 jun 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978HELSIN01810  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780243-0774  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** HELSINKI  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780673/aaaacfq.tel  
**Line Count:** 166  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 69b5bf8b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 04 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2406835  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** \"NEW\" LIBERAL PARTY ELECTS NEW CHAIRMAN  
**TAGS:** PINT, PINR, FI, NATO, (JAEGER, RICHARD)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/69b5bf8b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014